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EXAMINER: ARTI R. SINGH

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10/656736

SS3335USDIV1

RESPONSE TO RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT
COPY OF PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT ((4 PAGES))

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NO. 3784 P. 2/6

MAY 25 2005

PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

IN THE APPLICATION OF:

JOHN C. CLEARY ET. AL.

CASE NO.: SS3335USDIV1

APPLICATION NO.: 10/656,736

GROUP ART UNIT: 1771

FILED: SEPTEMBER 05, 2003

EXAMINER: ARTI R. SINGH

FOR: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR HEATING NONWOVEN WEBS

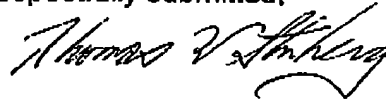
RESPONSE TO RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

In response to the Restriction Requirement issued 26 April 2005, the Examiner's attention is directed to Applicant's Preliminary Amendment, filed 5 September 2003, wherein claims 1-26 and 33-35 are cancelled. A copy of the Preliminary Amendment is enclosed hereto for the Examiner's convenience. The remaining claims, 27-32, correspond to Group III.

Respectfully submitted,



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Dated: 5/25/05

TWS:fgl

Enclosure: Preliminary Amendment

PATENT
IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

IN THE APPLICATION OF:

JOHN C. CLEARY ET. AL.

CASE NO.: SS3335 US DIV 1

APPLICATION NO.:

GROUP ART UNIT:

FILED:

EXAMINER: ARTI R. SINGH

FOR: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR HEATING NONWOVEN WEBS

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

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Introductory Comments

Before examination of the above-referenced application, please amend the application as follows:

Sir:

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Application No.:
Docket No.: SS3335 US DIV 1

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Amendments to Claims

Cancel claims 1-26 and claims 33-35.

27. (Original) An apparatus for heat-treating a sheet material comprising:
a first heating zone;
a second heating zone; and
a tension isolation means disposed between the first and second heating means, wherein the tension isolation means applies tension to the sheet as it is conveyed through the first heating zone and causes a reduction in tension on the sheet as the sheet exits the tension isolation means and is conveyed through the second heating zone.

28. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 27 wherein the tension isolation means comprises serpentine rolls.

29. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 27 wherein the tension isolation means comprises a nip formed by two rolls.

30. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 27 wherein the first heating zone comprises an air-impingement dryer.

31. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 30 wherein the second heating zone comprises a source of heated air, a porous surface for supporting the sheet material and a vacuum source located below the porous surface for pulling the heated air through the sheet material and the porous surface to pin the sheet material to the porous surface.

32. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 31 wherein the second heating zone is a vacuum belt oven.

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Docket No.: SS3335 US DIV 1

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REMARKS

This is a divisional application in which claims 27-32 will be prosecuted.

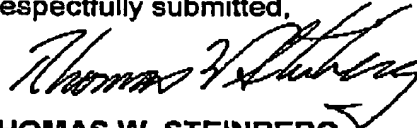
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Application No.:
Docket No.: SS3335 US DIV 1

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In view of the foregoing, allowance of the above-referenced application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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Dated: 9/5/03
TWS:fgl

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